

What They Do

Greenhouse Assistants carry out a variety of research tasks and experiments in the controlled environment of a greenhouse. They help researchers with experiments by maintaining equipment, recording results, keeping records, and making sure pests or plant diseases do not ruin the experiment. Greenhouse Assistants may run experiments on their own under the close supervision of researchers. They may also help study plants, analyze tissue samples, and prepare plants for DNA and cellular studies.

The main task of a Greenhouse Assistant is to care for plants being studied as part of biotechnology research projects. The projects they work on may be to create more robust crops, with better yields, or that can withstand harsh conditions. Some plant experiments involve placing genes that produce drugs into plants, to provide an inexpensive way of making pharmaceuticals.

Their wide-ranging responsibilities may include planting seeds, watering and weeding the plant beds, planting rooted plants, and nurturing root cuttings for new plantings. Greenhouse Assistants may operate machinery and equipment such as tractors, mowers, sprayers and assorted power tools.

Greenhouse Assistants in the biotechnology industry must take great care in their work because the plants they deal with may be the products of recombinant DNA research or other specialized experiments. These plants may also be rare or unique and may need extra care.

*Greenhouse Assistants in the biotech industry share characteristics of Agricultural & Food Science Technicians and Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other. Detailed descriptions of these occupations may be found in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) at online.onetcenter.org.*

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities include:

- ▶ Biology – Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
- ▶ Science – Using scientific rules and methods to solve problems.
- ▶ Oral Comprehension – The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- ▶ Quality Control Analysis – Conducting tests and inspections of products, services, or processes to evaluate quality or performance.
- ▶ Near Vision – The ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
- ▶ Number Facility – The ability to add, subtract, multiply, or divide quickly and correctly.

Training/Requirements

- ▶ High school diploma or associate degree or equivalent.
- ▶ Possess up to two years of greenhouse or plant experience.

Greenhouse Assistants

Biotechnology Careers

What's the California Job Outlook?

While the Bureau of Labor Statistics does not collect data on Greenhouse Assistants, the occupations listed below are found in the biotechnology industry and have similar duties. The California outlook and wage figures are drawn from all industries and represent occupations comparable to Greenhouse Assistants.

Standard Occupational Classification	Estimated Number of Workers 2002	Estimated Number of Workers 2012	Average Annual Openings	2005 Wage Range (per hour)
Agricultural & Food Science Technicians				
19-4011	3,000	3,300	90	\$10.90 to \$18.96
Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other				
19-4099	11,600	14,300	540	\$15.63 to \$26.73

These figures do not include self-employment.

Average annual openings include new jobs plus openings due to separations.

Source: www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov, Employment Projections by Occupation and OES Employment & Wages by Occupation, Labor Market Information Division, Employment Development Department.

Additional Sources of Information

Occupational Information Network (O*NET)
<http://online.onetcenter.org>